

For your health: New cervical screening guidelines

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In March 2012, the Center for Disease Control and the U.S. Preventative Service Task Force released the new requirements for cervical screening. Previously, there was an annual requirement for women's health exams. The new standards have decreased the screening requirements from an average of every year to every three years.

According to the CDC and USPSTF, women under the age of 21, regardless of sexual activity, do not require an exam. Their first exam will be once they turn 21 and every 3 years following until the age of 65. Women between the ages of 30 and 65 will undergo Human Papillomavirus testing every 5 years. This test is in addition to the cervical screening, but is accomplished at the same time.

Here are some common concerns:

What if I've had a hysterectomy? *If you had your cervix removed and there is no past medical history of abnormal results or cervical cancer, then there is no requirement to undergo a cervical screening exam.*

What if my cervical screening exam is abnormal? *If the cervical screening exam returns with an abnormal finding, your health care provider will determine the next course of action and the frequency of cervical screening exams.*

Am I required to have an annual cervical screening exam to renew my birth control prescription? *No, a renewal or refill will be submitted as long as you have a current cervical screening exam on file.*

If you have any additional questions or concerns about women's health, please make an appointment with your health care provider by calling 575-784-2778.

www.CDC.gov

www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org